

**LATINO DESCRIPTIVE REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL PUBLIC
OFFICE IN TEXAS**

A Senior Scholars Thesis

by

CARLOS RAYMOND HOLSTEIN

Submitted to the Office of Undergraduate Research
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the designation as

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLAR

May 2012

Major: Political Science

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ABSTRACT

Latino Descriptive Representation in Local Public Office in Texas . (May 2012)

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This purpose of this study is to document and evaluate descriptive Latino representation at the local level, over time, and as it relates to characteristics of the Latino population. This study has important implications, particularly within the context of the current immigration debate which places local law enforcement agencies, including sheriff departments and their deputies, at the center of many local immigrant policy responses. Utilizing election records and population statistics generated over the past fifty years, the election of county sheriffs with Hispanic surnames are analyzed for any correlation with the size of the Latino population while controlling for the effects of time within said county. Inferences are drawn based off of the results of logical regressions tests when compared to contemporary theoretical frameworks addressing shared group identity and descriptive representation. The results shed light on a statistically significant correlation between the concentration of Hispanic populations overtime and the election of Hispanic law enforcement officials in Texas localities.

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to the family of Jose Guerena; a U.S. Marine and Iraq War veteran who died on May 5, 2011 after the officers of the Pima County SWAT team deprived him of medical attention during an unfounded narcotics raid.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost I would like to acknowledge my mentor Dr. Francisco Pedraza, who awakened what always lay dormant within me, my own ethnicity. What seemed a simple opportunity for some extra summer cash has become the driving force towards a future serving the citizens of the great state of Texas. Thank you. To my wonderful wife and personal editor Ashley, who put up with me burning the midnight oil on too many occasions in the pursuit of new knowledge. Christopher D. Linebaugh, whose ideas and hours of dedication helped get this research rolling beyond its humble beginnings. To great minds like Matt Baretto, Gary Segura, Gabe Sanchez, David Leal, Rodney Hero, and many others who continue to produce compelling data on Latinos' role in American politics. To numerous public officials for their time spent and dedicated service to citizens across the great state of Texas. Thank you to the helpful staff at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and the Texas A&M University Library and Writing Center.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
 CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION	1
Why is descriptive representation important	3
Do Latinos participate	5
Why local level Texas	8
Are Latino candidates running	11
II METHOD	13
Assumptions	18
III RESULTS	20
Statewide	20
Majority Hispanic counties	24
IV CONCLUSIONS	26
Conclusions	26
REFERENCES	30
CONTACT INFORMATION	31

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	Page
1 Texas Counties with Hispanic Sheriffs 1980 and 2010	21
2 Level of Local Representational Parity in 1980 and 2010	22
3 The Effect of Time and Demographics on Descriptive Representation.....	25

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	Page
1 Results from Pearson Correlation and Logit Regression	23

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

While there is extensive research and conversation about the ever-growing Latino population and their effect on the U.S. political system on a national level, there is very little discussion on how a Hispanic population's growth over time has made its mark on elected officials at the local level. During the initial phases of this research, it became clear that the amount of readily available data on historical county level elections was for all practical purposes non-existent. With this predicament in mind, the ultimate goal of this research split twofold. First was to create a database in an end user format where inquiring minds could readily have access to information on historical sheriff elections. Second was to test the theories of Matt Barreto (2010) and Jason Casellas (2011) on descriptive representation and Hispanic populations. Matt Barreto claims that Hispanic populations are more likely to elect Hispanic representatives because of a sense of shared group identity. Jason Casellas hypothesizes that as Hispanic populations grow over time, there is an increasing probability that those populations will elect Hispanic representatives on the local level. This research observes the growth of the Hispanic population over time in Texas, and the local sheriffs elected during the same time period. The central hypothesis of this study is that the longer a Texas county holds a Hispanic

This thesis follows the style of *American Journal of Political Science*.

majority population, the greater the probability it will elect a Hispanic sheriff. Though this research only sheds light on Latino descriptive representation in one state, it carries implications that pertain to the political effectiveness of all Hispanic voters and politicians, as well as future strategies of political parties, other minority groups, and the shrinking Anglo majority.

There is no doubt that the national implications of Hispanic representation are important, especially within the realm of immigration policy. Ultimately, it is the local level of government where Latinos will feel the effects of these policies in their daily lives, and through this same medium elect officials to protect them against the negative aspects of Washington DC mandates. Laws set in place nationally are more frequently being enforced by local authorities, and the amount of state legislation on immigration policy has increased dramatically over the past ten years. In the absence of federal enforcement, the actual administration of national immigration laws and the tactics used to execute these policies is falling on the shoulders of local sheriff districts across the nation. In Maricopa County Arizona, Sheriff Joe Arpaio has conducted over twenty immigration sweeps during his tenure, while Sheriff Clarence Dupnik of neighboring Pima County refuses to enforce state and federal immigration mandates. This contradiction of enforcement is far from the American ideals of equal justice under the law.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 60 percent of the Texas State population reported having an ethnic background rooted in Hispanic origin. And yet we find that currently,

only 31 of the 254 counties, or 12 percent, have a sheriff of Hispanic origin. The effects of such a staggering disparity between a majority minority population and the level of descriptive representation presiding over them can have dire ramifications on Latinos, their voting behavior, and political participation. An overarching objective of this research is to evaluate patterns in Hispanic population and representation at the local level and assess the extent to which Hispanics are approaching representational parity with non-Hispanics in Texas. This study fills an important gap in electoral literature by providing a historical dimension to minority representation at the local level of government while raising the level of transparency in local level elections.

Why is descriptive representation important

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was put into place to ensure at least a minimal level of descriptive representation for minority groups (Garcia-Bedolla 2009). By electing candidates whose descriptive qualities match one's own, that voter is said to have acquired a higher level of descriptive representation. A few examples of descriptive qualities include ethnicity, religion, race, and gender. It is assumed that if an individual candidate has matching descriptive qualities, they probably have similar policy preferences (Garcia-Bedolla 2009). Theories on descriptive representation go hand in hand with theoretical frameworks addressing shared group identity. For example, in the book *Ethnic Cues: The Role of Shared Ethnicity in Latino Political Participation*, Matt Barreto argues that ethnicity trumps partisan attachment in explaining Latino political behavior, especially given the current state of underrepresentation of Hispanic

Americans and discrimination against Latino immigrants. Barreto further contends that other modern political factors such as the decline of party control in candidate centered elections, candidate quality over issues, and ethnic based outreach and mobilization, make shared ethnicity an even more powerful predictor of Latino voting behavior. Characteristics like the immigrant experience, perceived ethnic discrimination, and a common shared Latin American culture with an emphasis on language, foster a sense of “linked-fate” among Hispanics and contribute to preferences for co-ethnic representation in the halls of government. While a Hispanic candidate may not always represent its constituents substantively, the fact that they match descriptively make a statement that members of a minority group are able to assume a position of political power and advocate for legislation that will assist and protect members of the same descriptive group.

Given that descriptive representation is an important issue to ethnic groups that foster a sense of “linked fate”, what are the repercussions of a lack of Latino descriptive representation for both the individual and the group? In *Latino Politics*, Lisa Garcia-Bedolla makes the case that in order to act politically, an individual must feel empowered to do so and must believe that his or her actions can make a difference. Garcia-Bedolla argues that politically, individuals do not participate in a vacuum as free agents and must work within groups or coalitions to gain political influence. If that individual belongs to an overarching social group, with a long history of little or no influence on the political system, they are less likely to participate within the boundaries

of the system. This leads the individual to partake in non-traditional forms of participation, such as protesting. This has proven to be especially true of minority groups in America. Within a majority rule system, it is much harder for U.S. minority groups, such as Latinos, to win elections. When minority groups continually lose elections, the legitimacy of democracy is threatened, and the tyranny of the majority can wield its power unchecked.

Do Latinos participate

It is a common assumption that the lack of political participation amongst disaffected minority groups in the late 20th and early 21st century is highly correlated with a sense of apathy towards the American political system. While these claims are not entirely unfounded, the application of this oversimplified correlation is often misguided when attempting to derive inferences to Latino participation. Latino electoral participation is lower than most other identifiable demographic segments of the U.S. population, including other identifiable ethnic and racial groups (Garcia and Sanchez 2008). While historically the opportunities available to Latinos have been constrained by decisions of the powerful few, both public and private, to exclude Latino interests (Fraga and Segura 2006), today Hispanic participation, and lack thereof, has more to do with demographics and eligibility. Approximately 34.3 percent of the American Latino population is under the age of eighteen, 39.9 percent are foreign born, 21.8 percent live in poverty, and 24.4 percent have less than a ninth grade education (Garcia and Sanchez 2008). Cynicism is another factor plaguing Latino participation. Mexicans and Mexican Americans make up

the largest portion of the U.S. Hispanic population (Fraga and Segura 2006). As Mexican Americans become more acculturated to American culture, they also become more cynical of the government, leading them to be less supportive of the two majority party candidates (Michelson 2003). All of these factors decrease the level of participation within the Latino community. Even with all of the odds stacked against Latino political participation, there is still one major variable that rallies Hispanics to the ballot box in mass: perceived threats to the Latino community at large.

In the winter of 2005, Latinos across the U.S. awakened from their political slumber and came together to raise their voice in protest against legislation that threatened to tear apart the Hispanic community. The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005, also known as H.R. 4437, would not only increase the amount of tax payer money given to local authorities for increased enforcement of federal immigration laws, it would also criminalize anyone who “knowingly aids or assists” a deported immigrant in returning to the U.S. If a mother wires her “illegal” son money, and he uses any of those dollars to reenter the country, under the law she is eligible for prison time. Churches and civic organizations could also fall under the same umbrella of enforcement. Hispanics across the fruited plain were outraged, and their actions confirmed the theory that when Latinos feel politically threatened, they tend to mobilize as a group in response to the perceived threat (Baretto 2010). On April 10th of 2006, in a “national day of action”, well over one million Latinos took to the streets, and in May another three million would participate in some fifty cities, making this show of

political prowess the largest collective political effort of U.S. immigrant populations in American History (Garcia and Sanchez 2008). The “Sleeping Giant” had finally awakened.

This type of legislation is of great concern because it creates an incentive plan for immigration enforcement while broadening the base of criminals within the scope of the law. If a local sheriff’s office is falling short on funding, it may arbitrarily increase its enforcement of the new and much larger criminal population in order to acquire more federal aid. Instead of one individual being held accountable for their immigration infractions, whole networks of friends and families are now under the sword. By broadening the base of people considered criminals from the individual undocumented migrant to any persons who assist that migrant, this new bill would in turn place millions of “legal” Latinos under the threat of enforcement. Targeting a large ethnic population with a strong sense of shared identity and linked fate would prove to be a big factor in H.R. 4437’s downfall. Remember that shared group identity is what connects all Latinos socially in one way or another based on common aspects of a shared culture, an immigrant experience, and perceived discrimination to name a few (Baretto 2010). Legislative threats to the Latino community, coupled with shared group identity between Latinos, caused the largest immigrant protest in U.S. history, which in turn killed the legislation. Though political protest is considered non-traditional participation, this case study does show that Latino participation is at an all-time high when mobilized against a perceived threat.

The repercussion of anti-immigrant legislation in America is an interesting quandary. Anglo politicians put forward legislation like H.R. 4437 or Proposition 187 in California, in order to stem off migration while pushing undocumented and documented migrants back to their countries of origin. While there is no reliable data on whether anti-immigrant legislation actually stems off migration, immigrants already in the U.S. have shown an interesting response to such legislation. Examination of public records reflected a large spike in Latino citizens registering to vote, while non-citizen immigrants began the process of nationalization in mass (Pantoja, Ramirez, and Segura 2001). When faced with legislation that singles out Hispanics for targeted criminal repercussion and extradition, the pan-ethnic community of Latinos reacted by becoming more involved in politics while expediting the process of becoming part of the U.S. citizenship at large. This is direct evidence that not only are Latino citizens politically active, but their immigrant counterparts will go to great lengths to defend themselves against a perceived threat.

Why local level Texas

One of the most basic electoral rules underlying the American political system is the idea of majority rule. Texas is an interesting case study in Latino population within the majority rule system. As mentioned before, the US Census claims that 60 percent of the Texas population professes some Hispanic ethnicity. In theory, there should be a much larger level of descriptive representation in Texas, but this is not the case. This is

especially disheartening because it is much easier for Latino officials on the local level to get elected because it takes a smaller number of people to surpass the 50 percent threshold (Garcia-Bedolla 2009), and text book treatments of Latino political participation (Garcia & Sanchez 2008; Garcia-Bedolla 2009; Hero 1992) argue that Latinos are most likely to achieve representational parity at local levels of government. The amount of funding and mobilization is much smaller on the local level, increasing the Latino community's political clout in comparison to the statewide or federal level of politics (Garcia-Bedolla 2009). Yet, there are few if any substantial studies that document Latino representation at the local level over time, or across change in the size and share of the Latino population in a particular locale. As mentioned in the earlier, Barreto (2010) and Casellas (2011) hypothesize that locales where the Hispanic population has increased over time are the most likely to elect Hispanic officials. With data collected in this research, I can systematically test this expectation, and update the current state of our knowledge on minority representation.

It is also important to observe local representation in context with the current regulations of immigration enforcement, where a complex interweaving bureaucracy of both federal and local law enforcement are regulating congressional laws. When attempting to compare quantitative immigration enforcement levels between federal and local agencies, researchers will find that there is little reliable data available to the public. One thing is for certain, in the absence of congressional action on the issue of immigration,

federal agencies have enlisted local peace officers to enforce federal immigration law through a series of complex inter-governmental agreements.

Texas citizens, particularly those of Latino descent, have expressed concerns about regulatory developments in cross-deputization. Liana Maris Epstein and Phillip Atiba Goff (2011) profess that cross-deputization allows local law enforcement officials to enforce federal immigration violations under section 287 (g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1996. Similar provisions have also been added to the memorandums associated with the Secure Communities Program and within Arizona's SB 1070. It is Epstein and Phillips belief that cross-deputization disproportionately discriminates against Latinos while straining the relationship between the local community and their law enforcement officials. As immigration enforcement at the local level increases, so does the tax burden, increasing the number of counties that sign Memorandums of Agreement in efforts to obtain federal subsidies. This also ties in with the incentive to increase enforcement mentioned earlier in the chapter. While most current Memorandums of Agreement sign on by the states give localities the option to opt out, some state governors are pushing for Memorandums of Agreement which do not allow their localities to opt out, making them de facto immigration officials regardless of what constituents and their locally elected sheriff believe is best for the district.

Considering these factors, it is evident that the local level has the most impact on the lives of Latinos, and fortunately for them, it is also where they have had the most success politically.

Are Latino candidates running

A confounding variable concerning Latino descriptive representation is that there may not be enough Latino candidates running for office to reach expected levels of descriptive representation, but studies on the subject point to a different conclusion. Latino officeholders were historically a rarity due to racial gerrymandering, until an amendment was made to the Voting Rights Act in 1975. This amendment removed structural barriers that restricted Latinos from politically participating, and set in place a precedent for localities to provide bilingual ballots. Since then, states with the large Latino populations have witnessed an increase the level of descriptive representation by more than three and a half times the amount of Latino representation seen thirty years before (Garcia-Bedolla 2009). Local descriptive representation in Texas not only concurs with previous research, but exceeds it. As of 2010, Latino representation has increased by more than four times the amount recorded in 1970, from seven sheriffs to thirty one. This increase in Texas Latino representation on the local level also reaffirms previous research on shared group identity, particularly that there is a statistically significant amount of Hispanics that will mobilize and vote for a Hispanic candidate regardless of partisan affiliation (Baretto 2010). This is even truer of individual Latinos who have deeper feelings of attachment to their ethnicity. Co-ethnic candidates increase a Latino voters' level of political awareness in an election, which produces a net result of more Latino votes for Latino candidates (Baretto 2010).

Assuming the validity of current theories on local Latino participation, this study expects that the longer a Texas county retains a majority Hispanic population, the greater the probability that county will have elected a Hispanic sheriff. Even when accounting for evidence of an increasing Latino population in conjunction with an increasing number of Latino candidates running on local level ballots with a higher probability of being elected, why is there still such inequality in the level of descriptive representation in a state where Hispanics as a minority are the majority? Due to the breadth of such a complex matter, there are still many questions left unanswered by the focused scope and boundaries of this study. With this taken into account, it is inevitable that the findings of this study and others like it will be of assistance to future researchers in finding solutions that address this constant disparity in Latino representation.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss in adequate detail how I acquired and analyzed this data, so that if future researchers were to follow up or build upon these findings, they could easily replicate the results. Gathering fifty years' worth of data on two hundred and fifty four counties has proven to be quite a daunting task. So much so that as of the date of this research's publication, there is still sheriff election data unaccounted for within the given time period. With these contextual parameters in consideration, this chapter is designed to show future researchers what avenues were most and least fruitful in the data collection process, allowing them to check the finding and develop new knowledge in the most expedient fashion possible.

This research was initially started by visiting every official website for every county in Texas, and for several reasons. In the state of Texas, the County Clerk is in charge of overseeing local elections. By visiting each counties website, I would not only be able to gather the county clerks contact information, I could also gather the current sheriff's name and contact information, as well as any election data posted on their website. Overall, individual county websites would prove to be an inadequate source of information. There are still thirteen Texas counties that have yet to develop their own website. Very few actually post past election data online, and in most cases the election data went back no further than five to ten years. Seldom was there even a working email

address to contact the local clerk or sheriff. While federal election data can be found with great ease over the internet, local election data for county level officials is near impossible.

At this point, various county clerks were contacted to gauge how easily it would be to gather the information from them directly. Though some clerks were able to access information on past elected sheriffs within their county, most advised contacting other government agencies. There were counties who charged exorbitant fees for hard copy printouts that may take weeks to prepare. There were counties who stored their election data offsite in some form of storage, making it either inaccessible or impractical to be searched through. One Texas County Clerk destroys election data after two years, because two years is all state law required them to keep it for. Several of the counties who did have election data to contribute, carried only precinct by precinct election records, which can take well over four hours to calculate the winner of just one election in a large county. Gathering county sheriff election data from two hundred fifty four county clerks would be just as futile as the internet. Fortunately, I received several leads from local clerks which guided me in a more productive direction.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission in Austin holds a wealth of historical county level election data. The Secretary of State and the Archives Division of the Texas State Library produced microfilm records of all local appointed and elected officials from 1838 through 1972. Though that only covers a short time period for this particular

research -1958 to 1972 - these microfilms have been an invaluable resource for historical research on the local level. Even after exhausting many other contacts pertaining to electoral information - including election attorneys for the Secretary of State, the Texas Legislative Council, as well as several elections canvasses and almanacs – *Election registers, 1838-1972* have proven to be the most successful resource for gathering large sums of historical local election data. The state library system in Texas has a comprehensive interlibrary loan program, and through this the reels were shipped to Texas A&M University for viewing. Many local universities and libraries carry microfilm scanners/viewers, and for a state as big as Texas, each microfilm reel takes approximately seven hours to scan. At this point, finding an adequate source of local election data between 1978 and 2002 has yet to be discovered.

With the election data compiled from the microfilm, and sporadic election data from the internet and state officials trickling in, an Excel database was constructed with the names and time periods for each sheriff in each of Texas' two hundred and fifty four counties. In addition to the name of the sheriff and years presiding, the original scope of the research intended to include his/her partisan affiliation and the vote tally and percentages received by him/her during the election. Regrettably, the extra data was impractical to acquire due to the lack of available information and deadline constraints.

The next step would be to assess each sheriff's surname for Hispanic descriptive qualities. This was accomplished in several different fashions. Some names like

Hernandez, Santos, and Rivera were easy to annotate as a Spanish surname. Other surnames, like DeLeon, LaRive, and Estes, were not so obvious. In the cases where the sheriff was still in office, a quick phone call to their office usually settled the discrepancy. Genealogy websites would be utilized for historical sheriffs. There are several popular websites that give an accurate description of the origin and history of surnames around the world. The main site utilized was houseofnames.com. In the instance in which a name could not be found on this particular site, others such as surnamedb.com, genealogy.about.com, and ancestry.com were also utilized. A significant portion of time was spent referencing and cross-referencing surnames in different databases to ensure the most accuracy possible, but the actual margin of error is unknown.

Population statistics are far easier to find than election data. Hispanic population data for each Texas county from 1980 to 2010 was available on the U.S. Census Bureau website. According to the information acquired directly from copies of the national census conducted in 1960 and 1970, the use of the term Hispanic for ethnicity was not yet developed. In 1973, bureaucrats in the Nixon administration began to apply the term Hispanic to the Latino population, but it was not introduced in the U.S. Census until 1980. Prior to 1980, the U.S. Census only covered countries of origin, Spanish language, and Spanish surname. The U.S. Census Bureau has yet to respond to inquiries as to the estimated Hispanic population during the 1960's and 1970. Due to the unreliability of

county level Hispanic population data prior to 1980, only the population statistics after 1980 were utilized.

The acquired election data and population statistics were then logged into a self-made database where the election of Hispanic sheriffs could be cross-referenced with the Hispanic population within that county. Every county with a Hispanic population of 51% or greater was highlighted for analysis, and another database was created with specific attention to those fifty counties. This second database has two purposes. First to give focus to the counties that were most significant to this research, and secondly to narrow down the sheriff election data needed to a more reasonable and significant amount. All of my detailed findings are based off inferences derived from the statistical data in these two databases.

In order to acquire the missing sheriff election data from the fifty one Hispanic majority counties, several public officials within each county were contacted personally. This rigorous approach involved calling and sending emails to three main sources, offices of the County Sheriff, County Clerk, and County Judge. Based on the chain of command in which elections are verified under Texas state law, it is reasonable to assume that each of these officials would have access to the election data needed. Once again, there were a number of problems that arose while gathering election data directly from public offices. There were county officials with dead and non-responsive emails. There were some offices with no emails, requiring faxes to exchange data. In some instances, the offices

were either too busy or unwilling to help with the research. In these occasions, the county judge is the best contact. Their office seems to have some clout when acquiring this data. In one instance, after a county sheriff refused to provide an email address or help with this research, the county judge's office was contacted. The judge's assistant emailed the sheriff's office requesting that they help gather the data needed, and they complied. Though it is rather tedious, this three pronged approach is the best way utilized to acquire election data from local officials personally.

Assumptions

The inability to gather election data for every county couple with research deadlines has required that certain assumptions be made before analysis can be conducted. There is still a large majority of counties missing sheriff election data between 1980 and 2000. Of those counties, all of which that have who have no history of electing a Hispanic sheriff prior to 1980 or after 2000 and have never had a majority Hispanic population, were assumed to never have elected a Hispanic. While there is some probability that an approximate number of counties missing the data have once elected a Latino sheriff, they would be considered statistical anomalies not tied to population or descriptive representation.

When drawing inferences from decennial censuses, there is a possibility of missing some significant variances that happen in the nine years between that census and the previous census. A county could become a majority in 2001 or in 2009 and still have the same

value in this interpretation. Year by year population statistics would give a better understanding of any possible threshold at which Hispanics gains enough electoral clout to increase descriptive representation. Reliable year by year statistics on Hispanic populations on the local level were not found, thus the decennial statistics were accepted.

It has been questioned whether a Hispanic surname is grounds enough to deem a sheriff Hispanic. Current theory on descriptive representation (Baretto 2010, Garcia-Bedolla 2009) asserts that a Spanish surname qualifies as a descriptive trait of Hispanic ethnicity. The effectiveness of a Spanish surname drawing in Hispanic votes is compounded by the fact that local elections are not followed closely by the average voter. Voters may know the general background of candidates running for president, congress, or governor, but the local level candidates have far less name recognition. The average non-Hispanic voter that shares similar demographical attributes with Latino voters is not very familiar with local level candidates, and one can assume Latinos are similar if not less familiar. When a Hispanic voter reaches the bottom half of his/her ballot, if a “Martinez” is running against a “Smith”, studies have shown a statistically significant portion of Latino will vote for the Hispanic surname. It does not matter if Jose “Martinez” spent his whole life in an upper class white neighborhood and cannot speak Spanish, or that Janet “Martinez” is actually Anglo and married to a Latino. Having a Hispanic surname has a significant effect on Hispanic voter preferences. Any case situations where a non-Hispanic candidate has a Hispanic surname would be considered a statistical anomaly and not the norm.

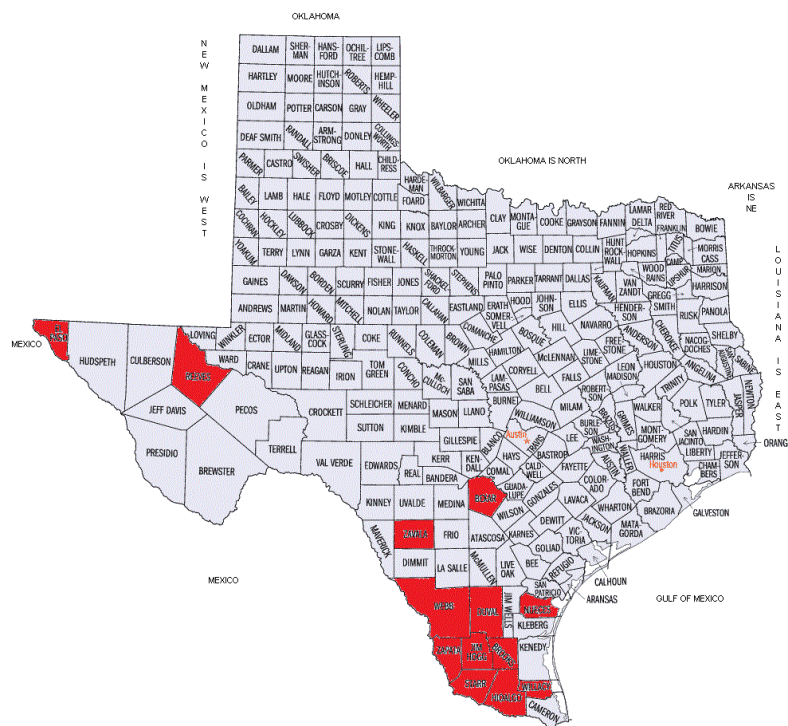
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

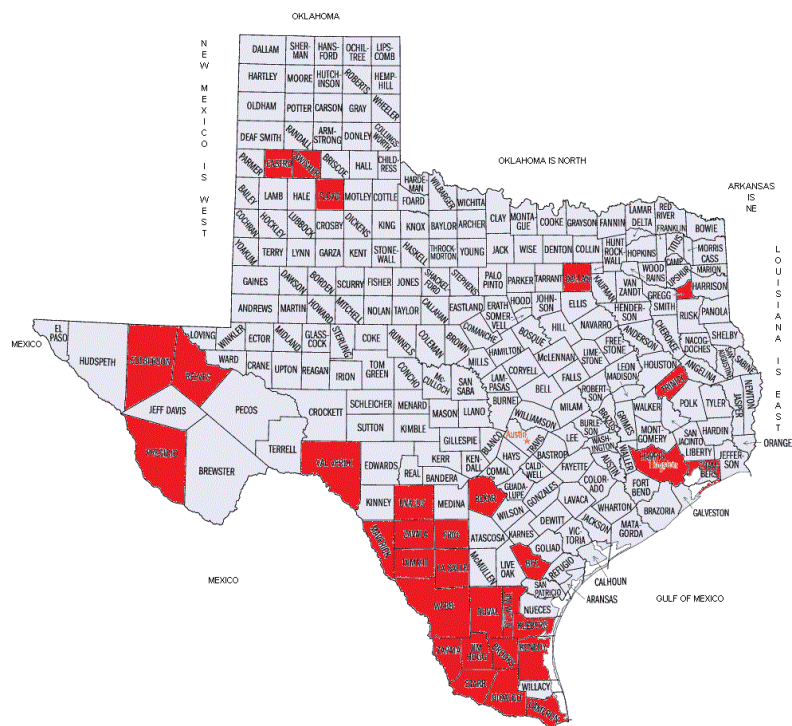
Statewide

In 1980, only thirteen of Texas' 254 counties had a Hispanic sheriff. According to the 1980's US Census, 21 percent of the Texas population was of Spanish origin. As of 2010 thirty one counties have a Hispanic sheriff in a state with a Hispanic population of 60 percent. Figure 1 on the following page shows two maps of the state of Texas apportioned by county. The map on the left shows every Texas county that had a Hispanic sheriff elected in 1980. The map on the right shows every Texas county that had a Hispanic sheriff in office in 2010. The majority of Latino sheriffs are elected in counties in the south and west parallel with the Mexican border. There are several elected in counties within and around major metropolises like Houston, Dallas, and Lubbock.

Figure 1 Texas Counties with Hispanic Sheriffs 1980 and 2010



1980



2010

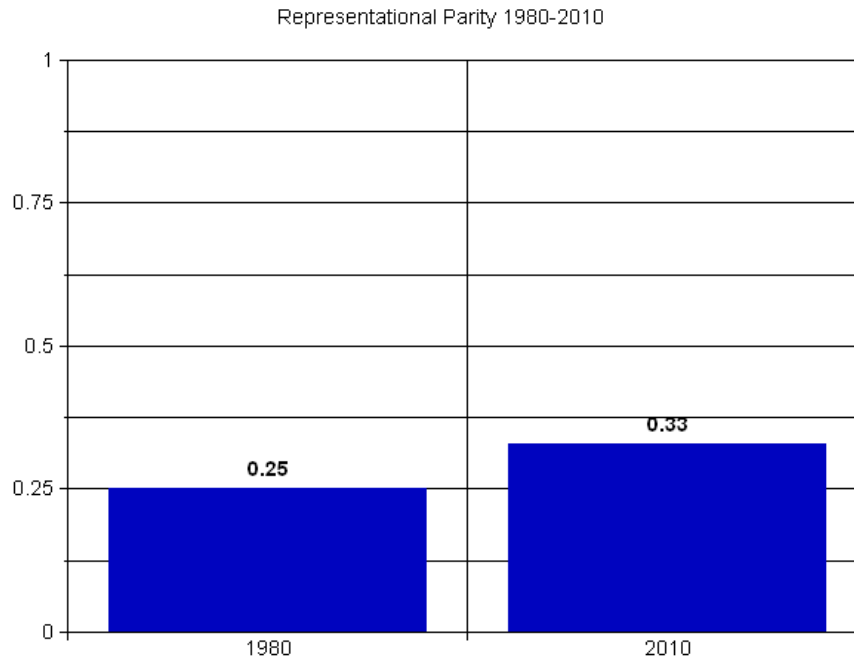
Figure 2 Level of Local Representational Parity in 1980 and 2010

Figure 2 is an evaluation of representation parity by comparing the Hispanic population in 1980 and 2010 with the amount of counties with Hispanic sheriffs elected in their respective year. As a reference, 1 is complete representational parity for the Hispanic population and 0 is no Hispanic representation. The graph illustrates that Latinos are still struggling to reach a representational parity. Even though the total amount of Hispanic sheriffs in Texas has more than doubled during this thirty year period, the Hispanic population has tripled.

After running the statewide data through a Pearson correlation, logit, and logical regression analysis on Stata 10 software, the following output tables were made

available for analysis. The logit model was chosen because it is best suited for a dichotomous dependent variable

Table 1 Results from Pearson Correlation and Logit Regression

DV= Is a Latino Sheriff Elected	Pearson (r) Correlation Coeff. Between Ivs	Pearson (r) Correlation Coeff. w/ DV	Prob > chi2	Logit Coeff. [Odds Ratio]	Std. Err.	z	P > z
Duration of Maj. His. Pop.	.88	.71	.000	.819 [2.268]	.359	2.28	.023
Share of His. Pop.		.616		3.113 [22.488]	2.47	1.26	.208

DV= Is a Latino Sheriff Elected

In Table 1, the Pearson's r statistic measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. The Pearson's r in this regression model is .715 for Duration and .616 for Share, which can be interpreted to say that these two independent variables individually account for a moderate correlation with the dependent variable. When controlling for one another in a multivariate logistical regression, a Prob > chi2 of .000 verifies that Share and Duration are significant variables for explaining the probability of Latino sheriffs being elected. The odds of change in the dependent variable are positive for both independent variables, with a very strong slope in probability for increases in the Share of population. The $P > |z|$ statistic defines whether the relationship between the independent variables in tandem are significant with the

dependent variable, and for all practical matters is the P-value. Table 1 interprets that the independent variable with the strongest effect on whether or not a county has a Latino Sheriff is the duration in which it has been a majority Hispanic county with a significant P-value of .023. Interestingly, in this model the Share variable is no longer statistically significant at a value of .208. It is speculated that discrepancies in the statistical outputs are due to measuring variables of different scales in a logistical regression. Inconstancies could also be caused by a statistical phenomenon known as multicollinearity because the two independent variables account strongly for one another.

Majority Hispanic counties

As of the 2010 US Census, there are fifty one counties that have a Hispanic population over 50 percent. Twenty five of these counties have had a Hispanic majority since at least 1980. There are currently two counties with a Hispanic population at exactly 50 percent that were not included in statistical analysis. There are three counties who all acquired a Hispanic majority in 1990 that would lose that majority by 2000. Two of those counties reacquired their major population 2010. The third county has not regained its majority status and was not included in the statistical analysis. Of the fifty one majority counties, twenty five currently have a Hispanic sheriff. When compared to the meager 12 percent of Hispanic sheriffs elected in all counties statewide, there is clear evidence that the concentration of Hispanic population has a moderate to strong effect on the probability a Hispanic sheriff can or will be elected within that county. Revisiting

Table 1 confirms this when evaluating the Pearson Correlation and the positive increase the independent variables have on election outcomes.

Figure 3 The Effect of Time and Demographics on Descriptive Representation

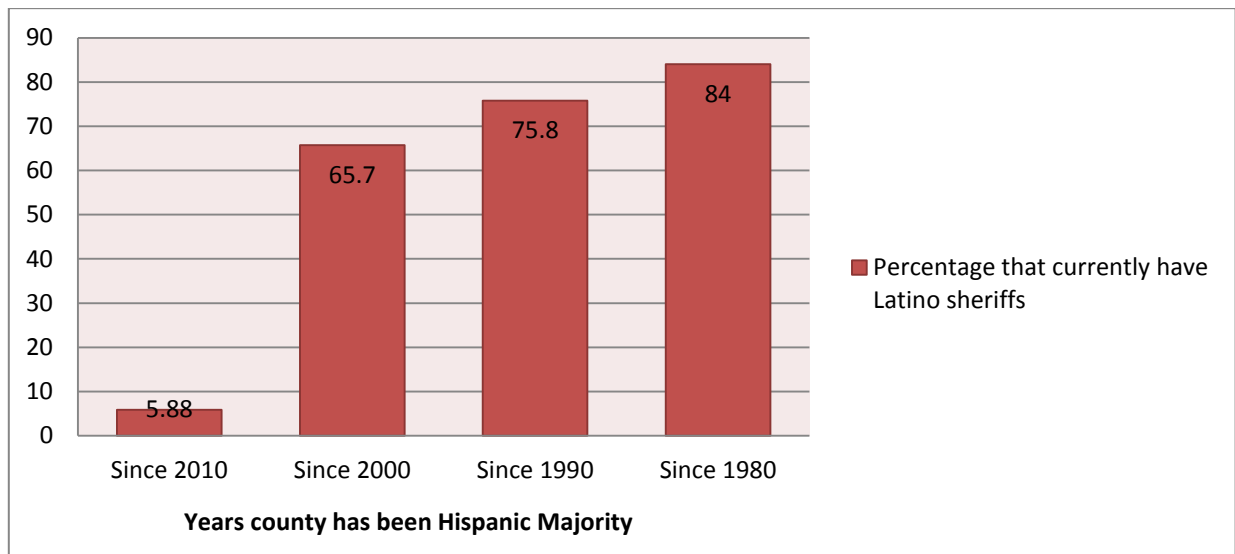


Figure 3 displays how the duration of being a majority Hispanic population affects the probability of electing a Latino sheriff in those counties. When looking at the electoral influence of majority Hispanic populations overtime, 24 of the 35 counties who have had a Hispanic majority for at least ten years currently have a Latino sheriff. That's 66 percent. That percentage grows to 76 percent with a twenty year majority, and 84 percent with a thirty year majority. When analyzing Texas counties that surpassed a 50 percent Hispanic population between 2000 and 2010, only one of those seventeen counties currently has a Hispanic sheriff. That is less than 6 percent.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

When accounting for all of the data observed, this study confirms current theory and accepts the central hypothesis that the longer a county holds a Hispanic majority, the greater the probability it will elect a Hispanic sheriff. Hispanics in Texas are steadily reaching higher levels of descriptive representational parity, but this increase is slow and far from proportional in consideration to the size of the Hispanic population. Latino officials are being elected on the local level in greater numbers today than at any time in Texas history, but this increase is unable to keep pace with the growth in Latino population. In counties where Hispanics are a majority of the total population, there is a much higher probability of Latinos officials representing them in local offices in comparison the counties with an Anglo majority population. The findings of this study also confirm current theories that Hispanic Americans as a constituency have a preference towards greater levels of descriptive representation. Though the actual share of the Hispanic population has less statistical significance, the duration of time a Texas county retains a Hispanic majority is a strong indicator of whether or not a Latino sheriff will be elected to represent them. As Hispanic populations in Texas counties continue to amass and retain a majority over time, observers can expect to see more Latino officials elected to local level positions of government.

Imperative importance of future research

The central contribution produced by this research is a baseline dataset of historical sheriff election returns in Texas. Hundreds of hours over the course of a year have been dedicated entirely to gathering the names of local elected sheriffs in an effort to create a database where end user data will be readily available for future exploration. As society advances in technology, a continued commitment to building upon this research will produce annals of new data that once seemed lost in time. Most endearing is the versatility of this database when applied to a broad spectrum of academic study. Future inquiry based upon the framework developed in this study is not limited to the field of politics. A historian may wish to continue with this data and create a more biographical account of all Hispanic sheriffs in Texas. A political scientist might continue building this data set by looking up newspaper accounts of unofficial election results the day after each general election, or continue adding new data to this current data set as made available in future elections. A social scientist may wish to craft maps that include representation in all county-wide elected offices or take a more extensive look at the demographics of Hispanic majority counties.

One example of this study's potential for future research is a variable stumbled upon while in the process of gathering Census data on population. In 2007 the U.S. Census produced data on the percentage of Hispanic owned business firms in individual counties in Texas. From data like this, researchers could derive definitive conclusions as to whether majority Hispanic districts have a greater financial capacity to support

politicized sheriff election than non-Hispanic majority counties. Unfortunately, many of Texas' counties have had their data on Hispanic owned firms suppressed due to unreliable statistics that do not meet the publication standards of the US Census Bureau. Taking into account a lack of reliable data that would lead any conclusion ambiguous, there are some interesting observations that suggest this variable is worth investigating further in future research. Of the twenty four counties Hispanic majority counties with quantifiable data, twelve of those counties have a Hispanic owned business population greater than 51 percent. Of those twelve counties, all of them have been a Hispanic majority since at least 1980. Of those same twelve, ten have a Hispanic sheriff currently and all have had at least one Hispanic sheriff elected in their history. As more definitive data is collected on the share of Hispanic owned businesses within these counties, greater weight can be applied to the inferences made on such statistics. Again, this is just one of many different directions in which ongoing research can provide new knowledge on a growing portion of American society.

Though this study is an intensive look at the level of Hispanic descriptive representation at the local level, it is far from being the last word on Latino representation. Latino Americans have achieved greater gains in electoral descriptive representation since 1970 than in the entirety of U.S. history. U.S. Census data from 2010 concluded that over half of the population growth in America was accredited to Hispanics, and current estimates project the total American population to be approximately one third Hispanic by 2050. When analyzing future projections of Hispanic population growth in tandem with the

findings of this study, one can only conclude that Hispanic politicians will continue to find increasing electoral success in polities with a high Latino concentration and a long history of residence in that jurisdiction. In the years to come, Latinos will struggle to reach an adequate level of representational parity, and the exponential growth of the Hispanic population will continue to outweigh the gains of electoral outcomes. While complete representational parity for Latinos is practically unrealistic in the foreseeable future, Hispanic Americans' preference for descriptive representation is steadily being met. As the size and breadth of the Hispanic population grows, coupled with demographic changes in the coming generations, Latino voters will gain tremendous electoral clout on the local level.

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